

**Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago**  
**Fourth Annual Summit on Regional Competitiveness**  
**November 17, 2016**

**Closing Remarks**

KELLY O'BRIEN: Standing between you and a cocktail reception is me. So I will be brief. And in terms of two housekeeping items, one is, all of the PowerPoints that you saw today, as well as a link to the report that Dr. Carmel Ruffolo mentioned in her remarks, will be available on the app starting tomorrow. So if you have not downloaded the app, do so before you leave.

At this point, you should be very familiar with today's conference theme, *A Look Over the Horizon: Setting an Action Agenda for the Mega Region*. And I asked you this morning to please fill out those blue cards on the table. Again, I'm going to ask that you take a moment and share a big idea. I commit to you that those ideas will be shared with the Alliance board of directors, and taken very seriously as we continue to chart the course forward.

I want to say that last year was a real turning point for the Alliance; growing the board of directors from three to 13, streamlining our focus areas, and I'm happy to report that great momentum continues. As we continue to

advance our mission, I remind myself that connectivity is the most revolutionary force in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Global strategist and bestselling author, Parag Khanna, states in his recent book, "Beneath the chaos of a world that appears to be falling apart is a new foundation of connectivity pulling it together."

And again, I want to reinforce the fact that our 21-county region is the largest contributor to the national GDP. The economy has gone from agrarian to an industrial economy, to a service-based economy, and now many are saying that we're entering a "creative" economy.

Multimillionaires are made overnight because of the creation of an app. So let's be creative. Let's embrace regional strategies. Let's demand our elected officials be statesmen and work together, and I have to say, I am very encourage by what we heard today. Let's lead by example. Let's put a growth plan in place and watch those lines on charts just shoot up. Let's live the hashtag, #makingoureconomystrong.

So, thank you so much for being here at the 2016 Summit. Please commit to being a part of our work in 2017, and ladies and gentlemen, cocktails are served. A big round of applause to Dave Ryan for emceeding today's event. Nice job, Dave.

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